

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1279  
By Cochran

A RESOLUTION to honor the Reverend Reece Harris who, in June 2004, will have served 43 years as pastor of Sinking Creek Baptist Church.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to specially recognize those committed Tennesseans who have devoted their lives to the Gospel ministry as they mark special milestones in their lives; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding minister of the Word of God is the Reverend Reece Harris of Johnson City, who in June of this year, will mark his 43rd year as Pastor of Sinking Creek Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, as the Reverend Harris observes this anniversary, he has not only the longest tenure of any pastor in the Watauga Baptist Association, which is comprised of 56 churches, but is the pastor of the oldest church in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a native of Flag Pond, Reece Harris dropped out of school after the eighth grade and went to work at a sawmill, where he lost his thumb in an accident; he then became an employee of General Motors in Michigan for five years; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, Reece Harris was saved and baptized in Flag Pond; at age 23, he resumed his formal education and graduated from Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy at Seymour in 1955; and

WHEREAS, three days after receiving his high school diploma, the Reverend Harris began to preach; three years later, he graduated from Carson-Newman College and then attended Southwest Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas from 1958-61. In 1974, he received a Master's degree from East Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, after receiving his degree, the Reverend Harris served as a guidance counselor at Daniel Boone High School from 1974-77 and at David Crockett High School from 1977 until his retirement in 1999; and

WHEREAS, since 1961, the Reverend Harris has been pastor at Sinking Creek Baptist Church, delivering sermons from the pulpit of the old log church until a new sanctuary was constructed in 1962; following his father's footsteps, the Reverend Harris's son Phillip is the Youth Director at Sinking Creek Baptist Church today; and

WHEREAS, the members of Sinking Creek Baptist Church and the community at large have indeed been blessed by his daily reflection of God's leadership, compassion and grace as he has striven to live out the course that his Creator has set before him; and

WHEREAS, we wish to take this opportunity to specially recognize one of this State's finest ministers of the Gospel as he passes a significant milestone in his ministry; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with the members of Sinking Creek Baptist Church and the citizens of Johnson City and Washington County in congratulating the Reverend Reece Harris on his anniversary of 43 years of selfless service to God, that community of faith known as Sinking Creek Baptist Church, and to humanity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to him our thanks for his commitment and devotion to his calling, and offer him our best wishes for every success and satisfaction in the future and much happiness in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.